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MONTANA LABOR MARKET

Monthly Review of EMPLOYMENT OUTLOOK, LABOR SUPPLY, LABOR DEMAND, CURRENT EMPLOYMENT

MONTANA STATE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

Division of Unemployment Compensation Commission of Montana

Albert F. Root, Commissioner

Chadwick 11. Smith, Chairman

Paul R. McClure, Commissioner

Mitchell Building - P. O. Box 1728 - Helena, Montana

FL-162

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AUGUST, 1956

Montana Wage Earners Number 170,600 in July

Continuing advance in the number of wage earners on Montana payrolls in industry and commerce during July brought last month's estimated employment to 170,-600, or within 800 of the 171,400 level reached in August, 1955, the highest total so far recorded in Montana. The figure is 1,500 higher than a year ago, which is the month that preceded the peak figure of 171,400. It is also 700 above the adjusted figure for June, 1956.

Excess 18,400 over February

July employment rose 18,400 above the number earning wages at the seasonal low employment level in February last, indicating the extent to which resumption of seasonal action affects wage earner totals in the state, from mid-winter low to mid-winter high.

Construction Nearly Doubles

Construction had 6,000 more wage earners in July than in February, from 7,500 to 13,500. Manufacturing was up 3,400, of which 2,500 was in the lumbering industry, 600 in food processing, and 200 in metal refining. Government employment participated in the seasonal trend, adding 2,800 to its payrolls during the five month interval.

Other Major Industries Gain

Wholesale and retail trade establishments were employing 2,600 more in July than in February, most of the gain being in retail outlets. Service industries had 2,500 more, 1,600 of which was in hotels, camps, and motels. Transportation and utilities show an increase of 1,500, including 900 in railroad work, 200 in bus and airlines, and 400 in utilities. The finance and insurance group reflects a growth of 200 for the period.

Mining Figure Recedes

Mining is the only industrial group showing a decline, February to July, amounting to 600, of which 400 was in metal mining and 200 in coal and quarrying. The metal item reflects an annual exodus of underground workers to the outdoors during the summer, a factor which persists in face of continuing job openings. Coal mining reverses the seasonal trend, with its highest employment during winter months and least labor demand in spring and summer.

Nominal Gain over June

July employment exceeded that of the preceding month by 700. Manufacturing showed the largest increment, adding 200 in lumber, 100 in oil refining, and 300 in food processing. Service industries added 300 for the month, while 100 each was gained in contract construction, utilities, and trade. Government showed no change. A decline of 100 in finance was probably vacational in source and the 400 drop in mining employment is another instance of workers moving to the sunlight.

JULY HIRING DEMAND SHRINKS LABOR POOL AS STATE APPROACHES EMPLOYMENT PEAK

Moderate depletion of Montana's reserve supply of available labor occurred during July, the month ending with 900 fewer work-applicants at employment service offices than it began. In-migration workers attracted by employment opportunities existing in the state prevented acute shortages in most occupations. Only such building construction skills as bricklayers, carpenters, painters and electricians appear to have been in short supply in some instances, and transfers within the state averted hardship or delay on the projects affected. Heavy equipment operators also approached shortage status at times.

Farm Employment Weakened by Drouth

Weakening of the farm economic structure by prolonged drouth in most of Montana's agricultural section, particularly where no irrigation is available, reacted to some extent upon the industrial and commercial picture, especially in the counties where moisture was deficient. Cities and towns in the affected areas curtailed employment on new building projects, and business firms required fewer workers to handle commodity distribution, because of diminished hiring and buying by the farm population.

Work-Applicant Count in Review

	1956	1955	1954	1953	1952	1951
February	13,061	12,304	12,455	10,995	10.136	12.336
April	7,974	9,227	8,945	6,043	5,705	7,048
June	4,694	5,274	5,403	3,910	2,957	5,809
July	3,807	4,628	4,283	3,249	2,191	3.260
August	*2,900	2,458	3,519	2,069	1,619	2,370
October		3,348	4,038	2,688	1.955	2.572
December		9,351	8,613	7.932	7.517	6,694
*Estimated.		•	•	,	,	,

Cherry Harvest Washed Out

The work-applicant count at the end of July was 3,807, reports from the 22 offices of the employment service indicate. This compares with 4,694 a month earlier and with 4,628 in July, 1955. It varies but slightly from the nine-year average of 3,650 for July. Part of the deficit in work-applicants from a year ago is accounted for in the cherry producing counties, where winter thawing and freezing disposed of almost the entire cherry yield.

Food Process Plants Staffed

Other food processing activities in the state appear to have entered their busy season of the year with sufficient labor supplies. They, too, draw many of their workers from among householders and youths, and are reported to be fully staffed as August begins. This work usually terminates with the first heavy frosts, except in the beet sugar industry.

Top Level Expected in August

Upswing in other seasonal industries, including construction, logging nd lumbering, servicing tourist traffic, forest and railroad maintenance, appears to have occurred during July on normal pattern. Ordinarily the peak of employment level, and the low point in available worker supply, is reached in August. The July carry-over of 3,800 applicants is more than 9,000 fewer than the 13,000 carried from February into March.

Widespread Activity in Construction

Principal concentration of employment in the construction industry is now at the Noxon dam project, where approximately 1,000 men are working on prime contract, and railroad and highway re-location and bridges. Important concentrations of similar employment are at Glasgow and Great Falls, on airbase developments.

More Winter Building Expected

Building construction, residences, schools, college buildings, and several armories in principal cities of the state are under way or projected. While some of this activity will halt upon arrival of cold weather, it appears likely there will be more winter construction in progress in Montana than usual. Most of the crews on these structures are already at work, and only slight expansion is expected this month.

Highways Employ Record Number

Construction and maintenance employment on the state highway system edged upward in July to 2,427, surpassing the previous record set in June, 1952 and tied in June, 1956. Maintenance crews numbered 835, road contractors had 1,422 on payroll, and bridge work occupied 170. A year ago the state highway crews totalled 1,950, nearly 500 helow the new record.

Heavy Volume of Road Work Ahead

Continuing volume of work during the balance of the season is indicated by the 59 road jobs now operating and by eleven contracts let but not under way, embracing 477 miles of main highways. Bridges to cost \$3,025,000 are in building process, with another \$584,000 worth yet to start.

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Along the Hiring Line— Field Summary August 1

ANACONDA, Deer Lodge, Philipsburg—(75 jobseckers; 42 men, 33 women; 6 men and 11 women over 45). Phosphate mining operations in the area reduced their forces to some extent during July, while hiring at the smelter was low because of negotiations for a new wage scale. Labor pool is larger than either the preceding month or the year ago level. Construction and trade hiring was seasonally normal and has probably reached its summer peak.

BILLINGS, Columbus, Hardin, Hysham, Laurel, Red Lodge, Roundup—(652 jobseekers; 470 men, 182 women: 95 men and 75 women over 45). Labor demand slowed late in July, particularly in the construction field as steel supplies were curtailed. Some hiring in clerical, service, and unskilled work. Beet thinning and hoeing completed.

BOZEMAN, Ennis, Three Forks, Trident—(256 jobseckers; 125 men, 131 women: 13 men and 15 women over 45). Opening of a vegetable canning plant with 120 to 140 on payroll in July drew heavily on youths and housewives available for seasonal jobs. Construction program on schedule, fully staffed, and with good prospect of extending well into the late fall. New high school building is starting on brick walls: two buildings at college are advancing rapidly.

BUTTE, Virginia City, Whitehall—(435 jobseekers: 248 men, 177 women; 85 men and 46 women over 45). Increased flow of transients in July, mostly from east and midwest. Metal miner situation static—demand continues. Remodeling of packing plant completed and about 30 called back after two month layoff. Construction program active, shortage of carpenters apparent for August and September.

CUT BANK—(52 jobseekers; 41 men, 11 women: 12 men and 3 women over 45). Labor supply about in balance, all skilled workers employed after brisk July demand. Construction about at peak, with apartment house, school buildings, addition to elevator, and a lumber warehouse nearing completion. Oil field employment rese during July with new drilling operations.

DILLON - (38 jobseckers; 18 men and 23 women, 7 men and 6 women over 45). I abor market in balance, depend upon transient labor for late summer farm work. Indications that grain crop will be light, reducing harvest demand. Railroad has crew of 60 laying heavier rails on 30 inde stretch. Forty men employed on 22 new residences; new dormatory and cottages at college using crew of 30. Mining resumed at leading plant, 30 inen put to work. Forest fires required service of 35 emergency workers in July.

LABOR MARKET REFLECTORS

July 1956	June 1956	July 1955	July Avg. 1950-1955	
170,600	169,900	169,100	159,900	
3,658	4,330	3,432	2,961	
3,807	4,694	4,628	3,589	
Aug. 3 1956	July 6 1956	Aug. 5 1955	Avg. 1st Aug. Wk. 1950-1955	
187	221	138	139	
964	1,115	1,072	1,008	
1,151	1,336	1.210	1,147	
	1956 170,600 3,658 3,807 Aug. 3 1956 187 964	1956 1956 170,600 169,900 3,658 4,330 3,807 4,694 Aug. 3 July 6 1956 1956 187 221 964 1,115	1956 1956 1955 170,600 169,900 169,100 3,658 4,330 3,432 3,807 4,694 4,628 Aug. 3 July 6 Aug. 5 1956 1956 1955 187 221 138 964 1,115 1,072	

GLASGOW, Fort Peck, Matta, Ophcim—(57 jobscekers; 24 men, 33 women; 6 men and 5 women over 45). Construction of new air base employs about 600 with probability of slight expansion in August and into September. Building program in Glasgow includes 20 homes, a fire house, gas station, bank, and business additions. Several road projects in the area now fully staffed, inmigration for airbase jobs continues. Farm employment dismal, result of drouth.

GLENDIVE, Circle, Wibaux—(91 jobseekers: 68 men, 23 women; 19 men and 2 women over 45). Construction employment is below that of a year ago, partly because of shortage of steel materials during recent work stoppage in the cast. Oil drilling contractors were actively hiring during July but in trade and service the demand was dormant.

GREAT FALLS, Choteau, Fort Benton, Stanford—(529 jobseekers; 332 men. 197 women; 82 men and 48 women over 45). Influx of job applicants in July resulted in surplus of unskilled workers. Railroad hiring has dwindled and smelter demand has been light through recent months. Construction of new power dam is in process of contracting and will provide substantial employment. Street paving program moving ahead. New clinic and addition to airbase quarters planned.

HAMILTON, Stevensville—(51 jobseekers; 26 men, 25 women; 9 men and 6 women over 45). Surplus of applicants for cook, waiter, and child care jobs; all skilled craftsmen employed. Demand in tields of construction, logging and lumbering, and sales people filled. Cannery and cherry pack demand expected in August: raspberry crop about 30 percent, strawberry season ten days short of normal, reducing labor requirements.

HAVRE, Chinook, Harlem—(68 jobseekers; 44 men, 24 women; 9 men and 6 women over 45). Less work on railroad tracks than normal, even the section crews have been pared. Light construction program, full staffed. Agricultural economy is down because of drouth, harvesting will be

done with home help and without requiring custom combines.

HELENA, Boulder, Garrison, Townsend, White Sulphur Springs—(i26 jobseekers; 83 men. 43 women; 19 men and 11 women over 45). Second shift has been added at sawmill in northern Lewis and Clark county. Building construction and road work at peak level, full staffed except for sporadic shortage of carpenters. Several new buildings being started, with prospect that construction jobs will go well into the fall season. Short of stenographic help.

KALISPELL, Columbia Falls, Eureka, Libby, Whitefish — (521 jobseekers; 386 men, 135 women; 94 men and 27 women over 45). Increased logging and lumbering, construction and trade employment in July cut into labor reserve, still an unfilled demand for skills in woods and sawmill work. Farm hiring active for haying and will continue into harvest of grain and potatees. Short cherry crop reduced hiring in that activity to a minimum.

LEWISTOWN, Harlowton, Ryegate, Winnett—(59 jobseekers; 25 men, 34 women; 7 men anad 9 women over 45). Road jobs progressing with full crews and slight turnover. Building construction is about at seasonal peak but less in volume than most recent years, adequate labor supply. Five day week continued at local manufacturing plant, pending increase of orders. New department store opening will hire about a dozen sales people. Drouth conditions have reduced agricultural demand to a minimum.

LIVINGSTON, Big Timber—(41 jobseekers; 13 men, 28 women; 9 men and 4 women over 45). Conversion of old railroad shops into repair plant for oil locomotives has begun, building of new facilities to start later, after clearing obsolete portions. Building project in Yellowstone Park at peak, staff and local building program of moderate proportions under way. Lumbering industry is at full strength. Railroad extra gangs still working but shop employment continues low. Labor market in balance.

EIGHT YEARS OF MONTANA INDUSTRIAL EMPLOYMENT TOTALS, BY MONTHS (in Thousands)

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Aver.
1949	1 17.1	135.5	137.7	144.0	147.3	151.0	150.0	150.1	149.8	148.2	146.1	143.3	145.0
1950	133.2	132.2	135.2	142.1	147.3	153.6	154.9	157.1	156.8	152.2	150.7	148.8	147.0
1951 .	141.9	139.4	140.3	145.9	149.4	154.1	153.5	154.6	154.3	152.4	151.7	150.6	149.0
1952	140.5	140.7	143.0	149.7	154.8	159.9	159.5	161.2	160.4	157.9	156.0	154.9	153.2
1953	145.8	144.5	146.3	149.7	153.1	158.0	158.5	160.6	160.3	159.6	157.6	156.4	154.2
1954	146.7	1.15.5	147.2	151.1	155.7	161.6	164.1	165.4	154.8	153.9	158.2	155.7	155.0
1055	11:1	146.8	147.4	153,4	158.4	166.8	169.1	171 4	170.0	167.3	161.7	159.6	160.1
1956	152.3	152.2	152.7	158,0	163.3	169.9	170.6						

Along the Hiring Line— Field Summary August 1

(Continued from previous page)

MILES CITY, Baker, Broadus, Ekalaka, Colstrip, Forsyth — (142 jobseekers; 90 men, 52 women; 16 men and 7 women over 45). Entire economy of area is below normal due to drouth conditions affecting agricultural field. Railroads laid off 125 from shops and track work, trade and service biring has been curtailed. Some employment betterment expected from beginning of new bridge at Forsyth in August, and projected building of an armory and a federal fish hatchery at Miles City. Cattle herds have been trimmed and marketed, farm labor demand at a minimum.

MISSOULA, Drummond, Arlee, Superior—(323 jobseekers; 211 men, 112 women; 44 men and 23 women over 45). Labor pool decreased in July to meet demands from lumbering and logging, construction, service industries and trade employers. Only shortage in sight is for bricklayers. Some workers are returning from the Noxon project, unable to get on the erew there.

POLSON—(71 jobseekers: 47 men, 24 women; 7 men and 3 women over 45). Labor market nearly in balance. Lumber and logging is at full employment stage. Construction of road at St. Ignatius is nearing completion, will release 30 workers. Expected contract for Pablo-Polson stretch not yet let. Usual hiring of cherry harvesters dwindled this season because the crop amounted to only five or ten percent of normal.

SHELBY, Chester, Courad—(48 jobseekers 24 men, 24 women; 3 men and 4 women over 45). Construction employment at seasonal peak. Street paving project about 85 percent completed, grain terminal well advanced, residence and business building active. Shortage of construction skills may develop in August. Haying nearly complete, grain harvest to start soon, normal crop and demand in prospect.

SIDNEY—(48 jobseekers; 30 men, 18 women; 11 nnen and 2 women over 45). Preparations for construction of power plant are progressing rapidly, with 50 to 60 men employed. New armory building begun, foundation work under way. Will need bricklayers and earpenters later in season. New office building may be completed by September, seven men on the job. Less home building than in 1955, only two under way and five planned. Drouth in non-irrigated areas has reduced farm hiring.

THOMPSON FALLS, Hot Springs—(73 jobseekers; 53 men, 20 women; 21 men and 3 women over 45). Many in-migrants arriving, seeking jobs on the Noxon dan, where about 1,000 are now employed on the main and subsidiary contracts. Supply is adequate. Lumbering is at full strength, fully staffed, and no sawmill or woods skills in reserve.

WOLF POINT, Plentywood, Scobey—(82 jobseekers; 48 men, 34 women; 9 men and 6 women over 45). Hiring by farm implement firms, cafes, and lumber yards slow in July, as drouth stagnates farm business. Construction outfits were fully staffed in June, very little July hiring. Some construction projects are nearing completion, no new ones to replace them. The housing project, road jobs, new school, and grain bin erection will all be done by September.

ESTIMATED EMPLOYMENT IN NON-AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRIES IN MONTANA (1)

(Produced in co-operation with United States Bureau of Labor Statistics)

	EA	PLOYME	Net Change		
INDUSTRY	July 1956 (2)	June 1956 (3)	July 1955	June '\$6 to July '\$6	to
NONAGRICULTURAL INDUSTRIES	170,600	169,900	169,100	700	1,500
Manufacturing	22,000	21,400	21,600	600	400
Durable goods	14,100	13,800	13,800	300	300
Lumber and timber products		8,200	8,300,		100
Primary metals Other (4)	4,400 1,300	$\frac{4,400}{1,200}$	4,200 1,300	100	200 110
Nondurable goods	7,900	7,600	7,800	300	100
Food and kindred products			3,800	300	20h
Printing and publishing	1,000	1,600 1,300		00,	100
Petroleum refining Other (5)	1,300 1,000			1	U(, ()(,
Mining	11,500	11.900	11,900	—400	-400
Mining	8,600		8,300	= 200	3111
Coal, quarrying and nonmetallie		800	900	-100.	200
Petroleum-natural gas production	2,200	2,300	2,700	-114	-500
Contract Construction	13,500	13,400	13,800		300
Contractors, building construction	6,100	- 1		360	600
Contractors, other than building		3,300; 4,300		200	1,400 500
	22,400	22,300	22.900	100	500
Transportation and utilities	II		13,400	(10);	—500 —800
Transportation except railroads	3,900		3,900	(8)	()(
Utilities including communicaion	5,900	5,800	5,600	100	391
Trade	41,400	41,300	41,600	100	-200
Wholesale trade	9,100	9,100 32,200	8,900 32,700	. 00	_
Retail trade	32,300 5,800	0,000		100 200	-4000
Food stores	11			100	-100
Eating and drinking establishments	8,400	8,200	8,500	200	160
Automotive and filling stations	5,500	6,500			200
Retail trade not elsewhere classified	7,000	6,900	6,800	100	200
Finance, insurance and real estate	5,700	5,800	5,300	-100	400
Services and miscellaneous	21,600				00
Hotels, rooming houses, camps, etc	4,000				()(
Personal services		2,300 15,200		I00 200	100 100
Other (6)	15,400				1177
Government	32,500		30,400	00	
Federal	9,100		8,800		300
State and local	23,400	23,600 [21,600	==200 ¹	1.80
Great Falls Area (Cascade County)	19,300		19,100		200
Manufacturing	3,000 1,800				100 100
Contract constructionTransportation and utilities					- 10a
Trade, wholesale and retail	6,000	5,900	5,700	100	300
Services and miscellaneous (7)	3,700		3,500	()(+	26
Government	2,400	2,700	2,400	-300	()

- Estimates include all full and part-time wage and salary workers who worked or received pay during the pay period ending nearest the 15th of the month. Proprietors, firm members personnel of the armed forces, domestic servants, and self-employed persons are excluded.
 Preliminary estimates based on return from sample of 787 selected Montana establishments.
- (3) Figures previously released have been revised on return from 1,020 such establishments.
- (4) Includes fabricated metal products, machinery except electrical, furniture, stone and elay products.
- (5) Includes apparel, chemicals, and miscellaneous manufacturing products.
- (6) Includes commercial trade schools, auto repair services and garages, miscellaneous repair services and hand trades, motion pictures, amusements and recreation, medical and health, law offices and professional services, nonprofit membership organizations and business not otherwise classified.
- (7) Same as (6) above, also includes finance, real estate and mining.

COMPARISON OF BASIC LABOR MARKET TRANSACTIONS IN JUNE, 1956, AND JUNE, 1955

Employment	New	Job A	Applica	nts	Job	seeker	s in F	ile			Job	Place	ments				U. I. C	
Service	July	1956	July	1955	July	1956	July	1955		July	1956			July	1955		Wk.	. 8-3
Office	Tot.	Vet.	Tot.	Vet.	Tot.	Vet.	Tot.	Vet.	Ind.	Ag.	Tot.	Vet.	Ind.	Ag.	Tot.	Vet.	1956	1955
				l		20	. 1		1			301		2.1		, ,	*	
Anaconda	48	12	281	215	7.5	20	63		39	50		28	17	34	51	11	33	45
Billings	652	228	611	215	621	191;	543		374	423		200	365	695	1,060	275	199	
Bozeman	106	19	98	16	256	67.	132		219	457		263	227	294	521	152		10
Butte	452	171	235	65	435	74	352		130	36		60	246	30	276	120		190
Cut Bank	67	23,	63	11	52	21	89		73	139		109	63	128	191	30	17	29
Dillon	58	20)	97	41	38	9	68	16	59	534		214	ا ت ت	156	178	92	6	20
Glasgow	152	56	128	59	57	8	170	30	196	101	297	125	182	153	335	123	14	23
Glendive	114	.38	62	23	91	29		25	67	92	159	41	96	128	224	59	9	8
Great Falls	398	121	359	107	529	147	333	1	265	302		229	379	416	795	348	202	178
Hamilton	30	6	25	.3	51	9	47	6	21,	121	142	24	43	568	611	21	17	1.3
Havre	113	30	108	45	68	13	26	3	254	126		184	246	148	394	188	11	ϵ
Helena	321	157	147	45	126	38	300			145		140	141	140	281	119		68
Kalispell	271	71_{1}	570	87	521	141	1,147		307	51		91]	161	24	185	75	95	10.
Lewistown	51-	13	44	8	59	13	30		25	78	103	42	51	163	214	78	27	21
Livingston	511	17	46,	13	41	10	92	20	95	115		91	46	93	139	56		33
Miles City	102	33	79	25	142	31	84	26	42	124	166	64	87	291	378	73		25 86
Missoula	224	7.2	192	50	323	92	304		301	211	512	227	274	264	538	218		
Polson	99	16	277	11	71	14	498	26	66	138		32	39	49	88	28	25	39
Shelby	98	39	65	38	48	3	43	7	122	97	219	59	105	76	181	78	22	14
Sidney	26	3	40	10	48	8	56		33	425		13	51	503	554	31	18	15
Thomp, Fls	37	11	80	20(73	14	128		49		52	28)	30	3	33	11	33	37
Wolf Point	98	28	78	26	82	22	42	8	43	41	84	32	72	79	151	55	13	2
TOTALS	3,568	 -1,190	3,432	922	3,807	974	4,628	886	2,927	3,809	6,736	2,296	2,943	4,435	7,378	2,241	1,151	1,210

^{*}Includes 34 claims of Federal Employees UC program instituted January 1, 1955.

AVERAGE HOURS AND EARNINGS IN SELECTED MONTANA INDUSTRIES

(Produced in co-operation with United States Bureau of Labor Statistics) (Hours and earnings data exclude administrative and salaried personnel)

	Average Weekly Earnings Average Weekly Hours					Hours	Average	Average Hourly Earnings			
INDUSTRY	July (1) 1956	June (2) 1956	July 1955	July (1) 1956	June (2) 1956	July 1955	July (1) 1956	June (2) 1956	July 1955		
All Manufacturing	92.71	92.42	86.57	41.8	41.8	41.5	2.22	2.21	2.09		
Durable goods Primary metals	93.99 99.97	94.18 99.97	86.65 73.42	42.3 44.9	42.5 44.9	41.3 37.7	2.22 2.23	2.22 2.23	2.10 1.95		
Nondurable goodsFood and kindred products	90,04 76.19	88.74 76,06	86.40 77.86	40.7 42.1	40.4 42.3	41.7 44.3	2.21 1.81	2.20 1.80	2.07 1.76		
All Mining	103.80	103.96	92.27	41.9	41.9	40.4	2.48	2.48	2.29		
Metal mining	106.31	106.31	91.47	43.0	43.0	40.5	2.47	2.47	2.26		
Transportation and Utilities (except raileds.)	84.02	83.01	81.20		{						
Transportation (except railroads) Utilities and communication	102.52 74.23	99.29 74.42	98.50 72.92	39.9	40.0	39.9	1.86	1.86	1.83		

(1) Preliminary estimates. (2) Figures previously released have been revised on more complete returns.

UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION COMMISSION OF MONTANA MITCHELL BUILDING P. O. Box 1728

HELENA, MONTANA

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